



PRESS RELEASE

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COVERED CALIFORNIA TEAMS WITH LEGAL AID CONSORTIUM TO HELP CONSUMERS ACCESS HEALTH CARE *\$3.4 Million Grant Goes to Statewide Consumer Health Care Advocates*

SACRAMENTO, Calif. — Covered California™ announced today it has awarded a \$3.4 million grant to the Health Consumer Alliance for providing community-based consumer assistance and problem resolution in the state's new insurance marketplace.

The Health Consumer Alliance is a consortium of legal aid organizations that educates consumers about their health insurance rights and options. It also will provide consumers assistance regarding eligibility, enrollment and other access issues involving Covered California health insurance plans.

"Covered California is planning a broad range of outreach and support for consumers to help them enroll in coverage and access their benefits," said Peter V. Lee, Executive Director of Covered California, "and this contract with the Health Consumer Alliance is an important branch of our education campaign. Independent consumer assistance groups like the Health Consumer Alliance not only help consumers, but also identify systemic issues, such as problems with eligibility determinations, grievances and appeals, and benefits and coverage that we can use to improve our services to all consumers."

The partnership between Covered California and the Health Consumer Alliance expands on existing consumer services and funding provided to the alliance by the federal Consumer Assistance Program. The Health Consumer Alliance's resources will enhance Covered California's ability to assist consumers with grievance and appeals processes, collect and report data on consumers' issues, and help consumers obtain health coverage.

(more)

“The Health Consumer Alliance partners throughout the state are very grateful for the opportunity to partner with Covered California in providing comprehensive consumer assistance to individuals and families as California implements the Affordable Care Act,” said Gregory E. Knoll, Executive Director/Chief Counsel of the Legal Aid Society of San Diego Inc., a member of the Health Consumer Alliance.

An estimated 5.3 million Californians are eligible to purchase health insurance through Covered California, and about 2.6 million people are eligible for insurance premium assistance to help them pay for it.

“The Health Consumer Alliance keeps track of the people who call our centers for help, so we’ll be able to tell Covered California about the experiences folks are having on the ground and how to fix them,” said Elizabeth Landsberg with the Western Center on Law & Poverty, a member of the Health Consumer Alliance.

About Covered California

California was the first state to create a health benefit exchange following the passage of the federal health care law. Covered California is charged with creating a new insurance marketplace in which individuals and small businesses can get access to health insurance. With coverage starting in 2014, Covered California will help individuals compare health plans and choose the plan that works best for their health needs and budget. Financial help will be available from the federal government to help reduce costs for people who qualify on a sliding scale. Small businesses will be able to purchase competitively priced health plans and offer their employees the ability to choose from an array of plans and may qualify for federal tax credits. Covered California is an independent part of state government whose job is to make the new market work for California’s consumers. It is overseen by a five-member board appointed by the Governor and Legislature.

For more information on Covered California, please visit www.CoveredCA.com.

About Health Consumer Alliance

The Health Consumer Alliance is a partnership of consumer assistance programs operated by community-based legal service organizations. Their mission is to help Californians obtain essential health care. Since opening its doors in October 1998, the Health Consumer Alliance has helped more than 128,000 consumers with health access problems.

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